



# GARDEN TO FORK

QUICK AND EASY RECIPES USING FRESH INGREDIENTS FROM YOUR  
HOME GARDEN

PUBLISHED BY:



SUPPORTED BY:



© FOUNDATION FOR RURAL INTEGRATED ENTERPRISES & DEVELOPMENT [FRIEND], 2020

All rights for commercial/ for profit reproduction or translation, in any form reserved. FRIEND however authorizes the partial reproduction or translation of this material for educational and non-commercial purposes, provided that FRIEND and the source document are properly acknowledged. Permission is provided for the sharing of this eBook, freely without any restrictions. Original images may not be altered or separately used or published without permission. For permission requests, write to the publisher, addressed “Attention: Publications Team,” at the address below:

Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises & Development [FRIEND]  
P.O.Box D623, Lautoka, Fiji Islands  
[friend@connect.com.fj](mailto:friend@connect.com.fj)  
[www.friendfiji.com](http://www.friendfiji.com)

[This book was published with CTA's support]

### **ABOUT CTA**

The Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) is a joint international institution of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States and the European Union (EU). CTA operates under the framework of the Cotonou Agreement and is funded by the EU.

For more information on CTA, visit hyperlink

[“https://www.cta.int/en”](https://www.cta.int/en)

# Table of Contents

Acknowledgement .....	1
Foreword.....	2
Seasonal Green Salad .....	4
Creamy Kumala and Vara Salad .....	5
Mixed Lentil Salad .....	6
Grilled Octopus .....	7
Homemade Hearty Soups.....	8
Broth Recipe .....	8
Seasonal Greens Soup .....	8
Fish Soup .....	9
Eggplant Tavu [Char Grilled] .....	10
Fish Tavu [Char Grilled] .....	11
Kai Tavu [Char Grilled] .....	12
Root Crop or Fruit Tavu [Char Grilled] .....	13
Tropical Fruit Juice .....	14
Banana Soft Serve .....	15
Lolo Bun .....	16
Gluten Free Flour Dough .....	17
Gluten Free Roti .....	18
About the Project .....	19

# Acknowledgement

Our recipes are inspired by traditional cuisine that utilized locally available ingredients before the easy access to processed foods, sauces, dressings and artificial preservatives were used in preparing and serving almost every meal.

We are thankful to our elders who have shared their recipes and stories. We thank our local cooks who have been trialing various ingredients to make delicious foods that are also highly nutritious. We also thank our guests who have been providing us with valuable feedback and encouragement to keep upgrading and developing our recipes from a range of local tastes. Much of the vegetables and herbs we have been using are organically grown around FRIEND and in our communities. Seafood is provided by communities that were declared ground zero after they were devastated by Tropical Cyclone Winston. As the communities have been rebuilding through sustainable organic agricultural practices, we have built the menu around these available resources to ensure there is market pathway for local foods, improving diets and sustaining livelihoods.

This recipe book has been made possible through the Innov4AgPacific Project which is co-funded by the Technical Centre for Agriculture and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU (CTA) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

# Foreword

Food is an integral part of our culture. Growing food, cooking and eating together has helped keep our communities together as stories are shared on history, culture, sustainability. A lot of time is spent around food.

As part of our rich history and influence from contact with other Pacific Islands, the arrival of Europeans and Indians, the food culture has evolved to include unique cuisines and flavors that are specific to Fiji. Fiji is very blessed to be surrounded with pristine waters and a range of seafood and seaweeds. Soils are fertile and a wide range of highly nutritious leaves, vegetables, fruits, nuts and root vegetables grow around the Island providing easy access to quality nutrient-rich foods.

In the recent times with the rise of power of marketing, artificial seasonings, flavours, colouring, canned and other processed foods have made their way into every home.

This loss of traditional cooking methods has continued and large parts of our diets now consist of processed foods high in sodium and preservatives, meat sourced from commercial farms that adopt the use of hormones to encourage quick growth and vegetables that are farmed using high levels of chemical inputs due to the infertility of the land and adoption of commercial agricultural practices.

Unhealthy lifestyles combined with changing diets and lower reliance on local foods has led to an increase in obesity and lifestyle diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure amongst the local population. Malnutrition has become one of the main issues Fiji needs to work on especially with its commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals 3 – Good Health and Wellbeing. Ministry of Health, Fiji is stating that 50% of children under 5 and 25% of children in the age between 5 -11 are anemic. The lack of iron results in a slow development of children who are at higher risks of contracting infections and other possible negative impacts on their physical and mental health.

Diabetes has become almost a household disease in Fiji resulting in up to 2 - 3 amputations per day causing families to suffer a lack of income due to loss of (wo)man power.

Besides diabetes, there are many other non-communicable diseases like high blood pressure that are among the major causes of death and illness in Fiji. There are many factors one can control to reduce the major risk factors mainly lack of physical activity (not enough exercise including gardening) and poor dietary choices (eating foods high in fat, salt and sugar and not eating enough fruits and vegetables).

No matter how drastic the situation may be, the damage caused by obesity and non-communicable diseases can be reversed if local communities choose to adopt healthier lifestyles by eating a wider range of healthy foods combined with frequent exercise and sound mental health.

All traditional knowledge has not been lost and some of our elders and home cooks who have learned practices passed down through generations still possess knowledge on the nutritional and health benefits of our local foods and on traditional cooking practices.

Through this cook book “Garden to Fork – Quick and Easy Recipes Using Fresh Ingredients from Your Home Gardens” we hope to share with you some of the knowledge that we have gathered and tested in our restaurant and with our communities.

Here it is hoping that together we can create a revolution to promote traditional food culture and healthy eating for improving nutrition and livelihoods.

# Seasonal Green Salad



## Ingredients

- 2 Bunches Seasonal Greens [Poi, Moca, Bele], Roughly Chopped
- ¼ Cup Tomatoes [Optional], Chopped
- 1 Bongo Chili [Optional], Thinly Sliced
- ½ Cup Shredded Coconut
- 1 Cup Grated Semi Ripe Pawpaw
- 1 Small Onion, Thinly Sliced
- 1 cup Coconut Water
- 1 tablespoon Lemon Juice
- 3 Mother of All Herbs Leaves, Thinly Chopped [Optional]
- 3 Lemon Grass Leaves, Tied into a Bundle [Optional]
- Salt and Pepper [To Taste]

## Directions

1. In a jar with a tight-fitting lid combine the coconut water, lemon juice, chopped mother of all herb's leaves, lemon grass leave bundle, salt and pepper. Cover well and shake. Chill in cooler.
2. In a serving bowl toss seasonal greens, chopped tomatoes, sliced chili, shredded coconut, grated pawpaw and sliced onion together.
3. Shake salad dressing and remove lemon grass leave bundle; pour over salad and toss. Serve Immediately or slightly chilled.

---

**Tip:** *If available herbs can also be added to the salad.*

---



# Creamy Kumala and Vara Salad



## Ingredients

- 2 Cups Cooked Kumala, Cut in Cubes
- 1 Cup Vara, Cut into Cubes
- 1 Bongo Chili, Thinly Sliced [Optional]
- 1 tablespoon Lemon Juice
- 1 Ripe Vudi, Mashed

## Directions

1. In a serving bowl combine the kumala cubes, vara cubes and thinly sliced bongo chilies
2. In a separate bowl stir together the vudi and lemon juice, mix well
3. Combine the creamy vudi dressing with the salad. Serve Immediately or slightly chilled.

---

*Tip: If available herbs can also be added to the salad. Add pomegranate seeds for that added crunch and flavor.*

---

# Mixed Lentil Salad



## Ingredients

- 2 Cups Mixed Lentils, Blanched
- 1 Small Onion, Cut into Cubes
- 1 Bongo Chili, Thinly Sliced [Optional]
- ¼ Cup Tomatoes, Chopped
- ¼ Cup Coriander, Roughly Chopped
- 1 tablespoon Lemon Juice
- 3 Mother of All Herbs Leaves, Thinly Chopped
- Salt and Pepper [To Taste]

## Directions

1. In a serving bowl combine all the ingredients and toss.
2. Serve immediately or slightly chilled.

---

*Tip: If available herbs can also be added to the salad.*

---

# Grilled Octopus



## Ingredients

- 1 Medium Sized Octopus
- 4 Lemon Leaves
- Small Bundle Lemon Grass Leaves
- 1 Medium Onion, Finely Chopped
- ½ Cup Chopped Tomatoes
- ¼ Cup Chopped Coriander
- Chopped Chilies [To Taste]
- 2 Cups Thick Coconut Milk
- 2 Tablespoons Lemon Juice
- Salt [To Taste]

## Directions

1. Rinse the Octopus under cold water. Cut off the octopus body [sac over the eyes] and set aside. Remove the part of the body with the eyes and discard, leaving just the tentacles. Flip the tentacles upside down and press the beak out of the opening at the center of the octopus. Discard the beak.
2. Place the octopus's body and tentacles in a large pot, add the lemon leaves, lemon grass leaves bundle, and enough water to cover the octopus. Cover the pot and boil until the octopus is firm but tender.
3. Remove the octopus's body and tentacles and place on a large plate to cool. Once cool, grill over heated charcoal to sear the outside of the octopus. Remove and cut the tentacles and body into 1cm thick rounds.
4. In a large bowl mix together the finely chopped onion, tomatoes, coriander, chilies, coconut milk, lemon juice and salt and mix thoroughly. Add cut octopus and serve in serving bowls with additional lemon wedges and your choice of root crops.

---

*Tip: Depending on your preference the dish can also be served chilled*

---

# Homemade Hearty Soups



## Broth Recipe

### Ingredients

- 1 Bundle Lemon Grass Leaves
- 5 Lemon Leaves
- 2 Mother of All Herbs Leaves
- 1 Teaspoon Garlic [Crushed]
- 1 Teaspoon Ginger [Crushed]
- 1 Liter Water

### Directions

Mix all the ingredients in a large pot and bring to a boil. Boil for 5 minutes and remove from the heat. Let cool and strain.

## Seasonal Greens Soup

### Ingredients

- 1 Bunch Seasonal Greens [Poi, Moca, Bele]
- ½ Small Onion, Thinly Sliced
- Chopped Chilies [To Taste]
- 1 Tablespoon Lemon Juice
- ½ Liter Broth

### Directions

Mix all ingredients in a small pot, bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Serve in soup bowls, with additional lemon wedges and your choice of root crops.

# Fish Soup



## Ingredients

- ½ Cup Cooked Fish, Shredded
- ½ Bunch Seasonal Greens [Poi, Moca, Bele]
- ½ Small Onion, Thinly Sliced
- Chopped Chilies [To Taste]
- 1 Tablespoon Lemon Juice
- ½ Liter Broth

## Directions

Mix all ingredients in a small pot, bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Serve in soup bowls, with additional lemon wedges and your choice of root crops.

---

*Tip: Depending on your preference you can substitute fish with chicken or your choice of cooked meat.*

---

# Eggplant Tavu [Char Grilled]



## Ingredients

- 6 Eggplants
- 1 Small Onion, Finely Chopped
- 2 Large Tomatoes, Chopped
- Chopped Coriander
- Chopped Chilies [To Taste]
- 1 Cup Thick Coconut Milk
- 1 Tablespoon Lemon Juice
- Salt [To Taste]

## Directions

1. Randomly pierce the eggplants with a small knife and cook evenly over smoldering coals until the outside is charred and the inside of the eggplant is fully cooked. Remove with tongs and place in a bowl of cold water. Peel the charred skin of the eggplant carefully and place the peeled eggplant in a large bowl.
2. Mix the remaining ingredients in a separate bowl and pour over the prepared eggplant. Serve with additional lemon wedges and your choice of salad and root crops.

---

**Tip:** The char-grilled eggplant can also be mashed and then served as per the recipe.

---

# Fish Tavu [Char Grilled]



## Ingredients

- 1 Plate Sized Fish, Scaled and Cleaned
- 1 Tablespoon Tamarind Paste
- 1 Teaspoon Garlic Paste
- 1 Teaspoon Ginger Paste
- 1 Small bundle Lemon Grass Leaves
- 2 Lemon Leaves.

## Directions

1. Gently scour the fish on both sides with a sharp knife.
2. Mix together the tamarind paste, ginger and garlic paste and marinade the fish both inside and outside. Stuff the lemon grass leave bundle and lemon leaves inside the fish and leave to marinade for 30 minutes.
3. Cook marinated fish over smoldering charcoals on both sides or on each side until fish is charred and fully cooked.
4. Serve with a dressing of lemon juice and a side of your choice of root crops.

---

**Tip:** Soak char-grilled fish in a dressing of lemon juice, water and chilies straight after grilling for that added flavor.

---

# Kai Tavu [Char Grilled]



## Ingredients

- 15 Pieces Kai [Fresh Water Mussels]
- Onion, Finely Chopped
- Tomatoes, Finely Chopped
- Coriander, Finely Chopped
- 1 Cup Thick Coconut Milk
- 1 Tablespoon Lemon Juice
- Salt [To Taste]

## Directions

1. Place kai in a basin of clean water overnight to remove excess sand.
2. Place kai over smoldering charcoals, cover with charcoals and cook for about 30 minutes, or until the kai is fully cooked. Remove with tongs and let cool.
3. Serve each kai in a half shell with a topping of chopped onion, tomatoes and coriander.
4. Mix together coconut milk, lemon Juice and salt and pour over the kai. Serve immediately with additional lemon wedges.

---

**Tip:** The char-grilled kai can also be served with a lemon and chili dressing.

---



# Root Crop or Fruit Tavu [Char Grilled]



## Ingredients

Seasonal Root Crop or Fruits [Cassava, Yams, Kumala, Vudi, Breadfruit]

## Directions

1. Randomly pierce the root crop/ fruit and cook directly of smoldering coals until charred and fully cooked.
2. Remove from heat and cool. Gently peel the charred skin off the root crop/ fruit. Serve with your choice of mains.

# Tropical Fruit Juice



## Ingredients

2 Cups Seasonal Fruits, Peeled,  
Seeded and Chopped

½ Cup Coconut Water

Mint Leaves

## Directions

1. Combine all ingredients in a blender and blend.
2. Serve chilled.

# Banana Soft Serve



## Ingredients

4 Bananas, Peeled and Frozen Overnight

4 Mint Leaves

3 Tablespoons Thick Coconut Milk

## Directions

Roughly chop frozen bananas and place in a food processor with the mint leaves and thick coconut milk. Blend until the banana's form a thick creamy paste. Serve immediately in bowls with a mint sprig as garnish.

---

***Tip:** Replace the frozen bananas with frozen ripe vudi [plantain bananas]. Sprinkle with cinnamon powder for extra flavor.*

---

# Lolo Bun



## Ingredients

3 cups Plain Flour

2 Teaspoon Yeast

Warm Water

Ripe Banana or Vudi [Plantain, Banana], Cut into 3 cm Pieces

1 Liter Coconut Milk

## Directions

1. Mix the yeast in a cup of warm water and leave aside for 15 minutes
2. Combine flour, yeast mixture and enough warm water in a basin to form a smooth dough. Cover and let rise for 20 minutes.
3. Pinch dough and gently knead. Divide into small balls.
4. Insert cut fruit into dough balls and reshape into ball.
5. Layer dough balls in a pot and pour over coconut milk. Cook on low heat until buns are done and the coconut milk has evaporated.
6. Serve

---

**Tip:** Enjoy the Lolo Bun either hot or cold with your favorite cup of hot beverage.

---

# Gluten Free Flour Dough



## Ingredients

- 1 Cup Breadfruit Flour
- 1 Cup Cassava Flour
- 1 Cup Coconut Flour
- 2 Cups Cassava Starch
- 1 Tablespoon Baking Powder
- 4 Tablespoon Virgin Coconut Oil [VCO]
- Water

## Directions

1. Mix all the dry ingredients thoroughly in a medium sized basin.
2. Pour in VCO and mix into the dry ingredients until fully incorporated.
3. Pour water [room temperature] in gradually until a smooth dough is formed. Cover and rest dough for 10 minutes.

---

**Tip:** Use the gluten free dough to make delicious rotis, pies and pastries. Dust dough with gluten free flour when kneading or rolling the dough.

---

# Gluten Free Roti



## Ingredients

Leftover Cooked Root Crops [Tavu Breadfruit, Vudi, Kumala, Cassava], Rough Chopped

Virgin Coconut Oil [VCO]

## Directions

1. Place chopped root crops in a food processor and blend on the low setting until a dough forms.
2. Remove the dough from the blender and knead gently.
3. Divide dough into small balls, and roll using a rolling pin and board.
4. Cook roti's on a hot griddle [Tawa] on both sides until done.

---

**Tip:** *If the left-over root crop is left overnight, reheat slightly before blending.*

---



## About the Project

The project “Leveraging the Development of Local Food Crops and Fisheries Value Chains for Improved Nutrition and Sustainable Food Systems in the Pacific Islands with a focus on Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu” (Short Project Title: Promoting Nutritious Food Systems in the Pacific Islands) is co-funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) and is implemented in partnership with the Pacific Islands

Private Sector Organisation (PIPSO). The goal is to strengthen the capacity of the Pacific Island governments, farmer and private sector organisations, and sub- regional institutions to develop strategies and programs- as well as mobilise financing- that can increase poor rural people’s access to nutritious and healthy food. CTA has overall responsibility for the implementation of the project.



**PUBLISHED BY**

Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises & Development [FRIEND]

P.O. Box D623, Lautoka, Fiji Islands

Phone: [679] 666 3183; Fax: [679] 666 9181

Email: [friend@connect.com.fj](mailto:friend@connect.com.fj)